

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
OF THE CITY OF  
WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND

1. Call to order: 3:00 P.M. Special meeting July 16, 2009 at  
Woonsocket Housing Authority, 679 Social Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Roll Call:

Chairwoman Lucienne Cote  
Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli  
Commissioner Albert Brien  
Commissioner Gerard Frappier  
Commissioner David Lahousse  
Commissioner Normand Laliberte – Arrived late  
Commissioner Gerard Remillard

Executive Director, Robert Kulik  
Deputy Director, Duncan C. Speel  
Attorney Howard Croll

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2. New Business

A. Chairwoman Cote asked for a motion for Approval of Award of Elevator Contract to Otis Elevator Company in the amount of \$42,960 per year. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Frappier.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Cote  
Vice Chairman Baldelli  
Commissioner Brien  
Commissioner Frappier  
Commissioner Lahousse  
Commissioner Remillard

- B. Chairwoman Cote asked for a motion for Approval of Award of High Rise Boiler Temperature Control Upgrade Contract to Automatic Temperature Controls, Inc. in the amount of \$32,800. A motion was made by Vice

Chairman Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Frappier.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Cote  
Vice Chairman Baldelli  
Commissioner Brien  
Commissioner Frappier  
Commissioner Lahousse  
Commissioner Remillard

- C. Chairwoman Cote asked for a motion for Approval of recommended candidate for position of System Administrator. A motion was made by Commissioner Frappier and seconded by Commissioner Lahousse.

Christine O'Connor, Human Resource Manager gave a lengthy presentation on how the whole process was conducted, advertised in several papers, receiving several good candidates, went through the applications and selected 10 for interviews. The interview panel was made up of Christine, Duncan and Michael O'Connell, a consultant to the Housing Authority. The recommendation of the panel was Owen Bebeau who has extremely strong computer skills and strong people skills which is very important in training and working with staff.

The Executive Director stated that at the recommendation of the interview panel that he is recommending Owen Bebeau for the position of System Administrator.

Vice Chairman Baldelli stated that he has known Mr. Bebeau for many years and feels that he is certainly qualified and believes that this is a good move on behalf of the WHA.

Commissioner Brien stated that he cannot support this and said it very reluctantly because he happens to like Owen Bebeau but this is a situation where he feels we have been totally unprofessional and unfair of the applicants who came forward and thought this was going to be an objective and impartial process. Commissioner Brien does not feel that it was any secret that the general consensus was that Owen Bebeau was coming here and that someone else was going to be filling the position of Personnel Director at City Hall. Commissioner Brien went on to state that he has no yet had the opportunity to review the credentials of the finalists but must tell everyone that he is at a loss as to why we are hiring a Systems Administrator when we already have a MIS on board. Looking at the job specifications, it seems to

Commissioner Brien that one inter-relates with the other and overlaps and he feels badly for Owen because he feels he is a quality person but feels he is going to be tainted in the process that we have not yet answered to the general public, the media, local governing body and feels that is going to happen at some point in the future.

Commissioner Frappier asked Commissioner Brien how Mr. Bebeau would be tainted and what point he is making.

Commissioner Brien asked Commissioner Frappier what right he had to interrupt him while he was speaking. Commissioner Frappier responded with when you make ridiculous statements, someone needs to interrupt.

(Out of order was called)

Commissioner Brien went on to state that he feels this is very unfair to Owen Bebeau, unfair for people that applied here and actually thought they had an opportunity. Commissioner Brien feels that this is something that was orchestrated right from the beginning and that is why he feels Owen Bebeau will be tainted because in this business, perception is every bit as important as reality and the perception in the community is that the "fix was in" and Owen got the position. Commissioner Brien would love to be able to support this position and Owen Bebeau but conscionably he cannot do that and he suspects at some point in time after you approve this today that they will have to answer to the general public and I do not believe that this action at this time is justifiable.

Commissioner Frappier stated that he disagrees and feels that the team that interviewed are qualified individuals knowing far more than any one of us sitting here at this table, the position that is required and the knowledge it takes. Commissioner Frappier went on to state that he is going to use the word that Commissioner Brien sent to the Commissioners and the word is obfuscation and it means to deny, stymie, darken, confuse or obscure and your presentation here today is another delay, another darkening, something we have seen for the last seven months and when is it going to end.

Commissioner Brien stated that he feels it is important that this entire process be completely open and be completely transparent and that is why I asked Mrs. Lacroix to please be sure that the minutes of this meeting be as accurate as they possibly can be because they will be the subject to the scrutiny with the general public. There will be conversations on talk shows, it will be unfortunately and perhaps he may be wrong but he thinks that the future will dictate that Owen Bebeau will be tainted by what appears to be a very non-objective process. The position we are filling and by the way, I cannot understand why we are filling the position today because Mr. Kulik said to us

at the last meeting or two meetings ago that we are thinking about creating the position of System Administrator and would like to go out and advertise to “go fishing” to see what there is out there. My understanding of us granting him the vote at that time was exactly what he was going to do and not ultimately be filling this position at this time but that is all part of this grand scheme.

Director Kulik responded that he was sick and tired of listening to Commissioner Brien, there was no grand scheme. The System Administrator position we have been thinking about for the last year. This is not something we just sat down with. If you would like us to get the Finance Director down here, we could talk to him about it. Mr. Kulik went on that he cannot run the department doing finances and running the computer part of it and the person we have up there, had he been capable to do it would have applied, he did not apply and for you to turn around make this some grand scheme is deplorable. Yes I said lets go look, the finance director is dieing up there, he is trying to do two jobs and he can’t do it. Emphasys is very important to us, the HUD reporting is very important to us. Nothing ever happened while you were elected Chair and now everything we do here is not right.

(Out of Order Called)

Commissioner Brien went on to ask Christine that normally I would expect that when we advertise and put together the job specs that for this kind of position that one of the criterias would be a degree would be in computer sciences. Why did our job specs not reflect that and rather reflect a broader business management degree in this instance. Christine responded that we tried to write the job specs for an administrator and not only in the computer work but into the accounting department and the Housing Authority suffered technically when we lost the former controller because she had accounting knowledge and computer knowledge and managed them smoothly but she was burnt out doing them both.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Cote  
Vice Chairman Baldelli

Commissioner Brien

Commissioner Frappier  
Commissioner Lahousse  
Commissioner Laliberte

Commissioner Remillard

- D. Presentation by Andrew Daniels from Mapplan, Inc. on the WHA 5-year Physical Needs Assessment and Management Needs Assessment.

Mr. Andrews made a presentation to the Board of Commissioners on the Physical Needs Assessment of the WHA Housing stock. He stated that after review of the properties and life cycle analysis that hard costs are \$40,000,00 without A & E or administrative fees. This is 4 times larger than our Capital Funds will ever be. He mentioned opportunities to leverage 4% tax credits or possibly mixed finance.

Mr. Andrews also mentioned putting most of our resources into Parkview Manor and Kennedy and converting one of the other high rises into Section 8.

There were specific recommendations such as Morin Heights, tax credits could work and at Veteran's Memorial, we would be looking at a major density reduction. Parkview Manor and Kennedy Manor are the most attractive and the waiting list is desirable. He went on to state that the family projects are in great shape right now but will not last forever as the wiring is getting old, piping, etc. and there would be a need of a great deal of money that is not available to us.

After a great deal of discussing what the different tax credits, partnerships, developers and private capital that could be done to revenue monies for Morin Heights and suggesting taking 153 units at Crepeau Court to make Section 8 and eliminate 150 units at Veteran's Memorial, the Commissioners had many questions as to what would be in the WHA's best interest.

Attorney Croll finally suggested that Mr. Daniels put all of this information into a bulleted format so all of the Commissioners could spend more time and get a much stronger understanding of what should be done and what would be most advantageous to the WHA. The Board will then get back to him with any further questions and recommendations.

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10. Chairman Brien asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Commissioner Laliberte and seconded by Vice Chairman Baldelli at 4:45 P. M.

Roll Call vote was unanimous.

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Robert Kulik, Executive Director